

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4476

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PGOV PINT YO

SUBJECT: POTPOURRI OF POLITICAL NEWS

1. AS MIKE DOBBS' ARTICLE IN "WASHINGTON POST" POINTED OUT,
EX-YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION MICUNOVIC'S MEMOIR ON
YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE 1950'S IS A BEST SELLER HERE AND
THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION. SOVIET EMBASSY FIRST
SECRETARY COMMENTED TO US THAT IT IS NOW CLEAR MICUNOVIC
HAD ALWAYS BEEN OPPOSED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF
YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS AND THAT HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO
COMMENT ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THOSE RELATIONS THROUGH
THE GUISE OF DISCUSSING THE MID-1950'S. SOVIET CLAIMS THE
RELATIONSHIP IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT TODAY. WHILE MICUNOVIC IS
CORRECT IN STATING THAT THERE WERE MANY IN THE POLITBURO
WHO WISHED YUGOSLAVIA TO RETURN TO THE SOVIET BLOC IN THE
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1950'S, NO ONE IS ENDEAVORING TO DO THIS TODAY. AS PRESIDENT
TITO STATED ON YUGOSLAV ARMY DAY, HE FOUND MUCH GREATER
ACCEPTANCE OF YUGOSLAVIA DURING HIS LATEST TALKS WITH BREZHNEV.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS SAME SOVIET SEVERAL MONTHS AGO STATED IN
FRUSTRATION THAT STAFFERS OF THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE
CONTINUED TO VIEW YUGOSLAVIA LIKE POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA
AND THAT BOTH THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY AND YUGOSLAVS HAD TO

DISABUSE THEM CONTINUALLY OF THIS NOTION. ALSO, HUNGARIAN EMBASSY OFFICER HERE WHO IS CLOSE TO BOTH YUGOSLAVS AND SOVIETS STATED THAT MICUNOVIC BOOK IS STRIKINGLY ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMS IN YUGOSLAVA-SOVIET RELATIONS TODAY.

2. TITO'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE. TITO'S NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS WAS NOTABLE PRIMARILY FOR THE ABSENCE OF ANY SURPRISES OR SPECIFIC STATEMENTS OF POLITICAL INTEREST. HE MADE SOME COMMENT ON THE ECONOMY INCLUDING ONE ON A SEEMINGLY NEW EMPHASIS TO CONTROL CONSUMPTION. HE MADE THE FAIRLY STANDARD REMARKS REGARDING UNITY OF THE NATIONS AND NATIONALITIES OF YUGOSLAVIA AND THE NEED TO COMBAT NATIONALISM. HE BRIEFLY MENTIONED THE "FURTHER CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ENTIRE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL DEFENSE" BUT REFERRED BACK TO HIS SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL ARMY DAY (BELGRADE 9149).

3. STILL MORE ON JOVANKA. TALK OF JOVANKA IS BECOMING LESS FREQUENT EVEN THOUGH HER NO-SHOW FOR NEW YEARS CELEBRATION WHEN OTHERS' WIVES WERE PRESENT IS PERHAPS MOST STRIKING CONFIRMATION TO DATE OF DEPTH OF PROBLEM BETWEEN THEM. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL YEARS TITO'S NEW YEARS CELEBRATIONS WERE NOT TELEVISED. WE HAVE HEARD RUMOR THAT IN SKOPJE PREPARATIONS WERE BEING MADE LAST MONTH FOR TITO TO SPEND NEW YEARS THERE. HOWEVER HE CANCELLED AT THE LAST MOMENT AND SPENT

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THE NEW YEAR IN RELATIVE SECLUSION AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC EYE AT BRIONI. RUMORS ABOUT JOVANKA'S WHEREABOUTS ARE BECOMING EVER MORE FAR-FETCHED. FOR EXAMPLE ONE ACQUAINTANCE RECENTLY TOLD US JOVANKA WAS IN PRISON ON AN ISLAND IN THE ADRIATIC AND HE HAD ALSO HEARD RUMORS THAT SHE HAD BEEN KILLED. A CURRENT JOKE HERE RUNS "WHAT DID TITO GIVE JOVANKA FOR A NEW YEARS PRESENT?" ANSWER: "A PAIR OF HANDCUFFS".

4. POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL ARRESTS AND OTHER POLICE ACTIVITIES OF LATE WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST-- AT THE UNIVERSITY IN SKOPJE A NEW DEPARTMENT OF SECURITY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION OF PERSONNEL FOR SECURITY AND SOCIAL SELF-PROTECTION. THIS IS A FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL WHOSE OBJECT IS TO PRODUCE PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED SECURITY PEOPLE. THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH INSTITUTION AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN THE COUNTRY..

-- TWO MEN ARRESTED IN ZADAR LAST SUMMER WERE RECENTLY SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS EACH FOR "ATTEMPTED TERRORISM WITH PREMEDITATION". WE FIND THIS TRIAL A BIT UNUSUAL IN THAT IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR THAT THE TWO ACCUSED WERE ACTUALLY

"TERRORISTS", AT LEAST IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM.
THEIR CRIME WAS TO HAVE SET FIRE TO A FOREST NEAR THE
ADRIATIC COAST "BY MEANS OF A SUBVERSIVE DEVICE WHICH
IGNITES WHEN COMING INTO CONTACT WITH AIR".

-- THE POPULAR AFTERNOON DAILY NEWSPAPER VECERNE NOVOSTI
LAST WEEK CARRIED A BRIEF ARTICLE REPORTING THE ARREST OF A
GROUP OF SEVERAL ARMS SMUGGLERS NEAR SLAVONSKI BROD WHO HAD
ACCUMULATED A LARGE CACHE OF AMMUNITION AND SOME TWENTY ASSORTED
HUNTING RIFLES AND PISTOLS. THE POSSIBILITY THAT WEAPONS CAN
BE SMUGGLED INTO YUGOSLAVIA RAISES SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS.
THIS PARTICULAR CASE HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE
WEAPONS SEIZED, MIGHT VERY WELL SIMPLY REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO
GET AROUND PAYMENT OF CUSTOMS IMPORT DUTIES ON WEAPONS WHICH RUN
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ABOUT DOLLARS 500.

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5. EUROCOMMUNISM. IN AN INTERVIEW FOR RADIO YUGOSLAVIA
TODO KURTOVIC, A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE
LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS, MADE A COMMENT WHICH MIGHT BE CONSTRUED
AS REFERRING TO THE EVENTUAL GOALS OF EURO-COMMUNISTS: "MANY
COUNTRIES WILL ENTER INTO SOCIALISM WITH A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM
BUT DEMANDS FOR DIRECT MANAGEMENT WILL INEVITABLY KNOCK AT THEIR
DOORS". IN THIS VIEW, THEN, IT IS INEVITABLE IF NOT
PREMEDITATED THAT EUROCOMMUNISM WILL BECOME ONE-PARTY SYSTEM.

6. MIODRAG MAROVIC OF "NIN" RECENTLY PUBLISHED SOME
INTERESTING COMMENTS ABOUT THE OPENNESS OF YUGOSLAV
GOVERNMENT PRESS CONFERENCES. MAROVIC CLAIMS THAT
YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS ARE MUCH MORE FRANK AND OPEN WITH FOREIGN
CORRESPONDENTS THAN WITH YUGOSLAVS. THE SAME, HE SAYS
APPLIES IN THE MEDIA. THE PERIODICALS PUBLISHED FOR FOREIGN
JOURNALISTS ARE MUCH MORE INFORMATIVE THAN THOSE MADE
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AVAILABLE TO YUGOSLAV JOURNALISTS. HE WONDERS WHAT THE REASON FOR
THESE "DRASTIC DIFFERENCES" MIGHT BE, AND CONCLUDES THAT IT LIES
"ONLY IN THE OLD CONCEPT THAT SOMEONE MUST JUDGE WHAT IS
APPROPRIATE AND WHAT IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR OUR WORKING MAN TO
KNOW." MAROVIC MAKES THE CONVINCING POINT THAT INFORMATION
CAN NEVER REPRESENT A DANGER TO THE STABILITY AND PROGRESS
OF SOCIETY, BUT THAT ON THE CONTRARY THE MORE INFORMED
PEOPLE ARE, THE MORE CORRECTLY THEY ARE ABLE TO MAKE JUDGMENTS.
HE ALSO POINTS OUT THAT AN UNINFORMED POPULACE IS MUCH MORE
SUSCEPTIBLE TO MANIPULATIONS BY THE "FIFTH COLUMNS" OF ALL COLORS.
THIS IS ONE OF THE MORE OUTSPOKEN STATEMENTS ON FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION WE HAVE SEEN. EAGLEBURGER

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